

INTRODUCTION TO CULTURE AND LANGUAGE OF KOM



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To

My father, Shri Teba Karong, Ex-Minister and my mother, Mrs
Hlamshochong Karong, who are no longer fettered by the Mortality.

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PREFACE

My main purpose to write this book "Introduction to Culture and Language of Kom" reveals how the Kom people lived in this country, Manipur. This book mainly discusses the history and culture of the Kom people in North East Frontier. Linguistically, the Kom Tribes have many important documents which show that they play important role in Manipur, this book says that the Kom people are originated from the cave. The Kom people had closely relation to the Maharajas of Manipur. During the British rule in Manipur, the role of the Kom tribes will be understood from Mr. Longkhobel, Chaison and Teba Karong were the first educated persons among the Koms in Manipur. Their services were utilised by the British administrators. There are disputed points that whether the Koms Tribes belong to the Nagas or the Kukis. This book will show who are the Kom Tribes. In the Book of Thadou Kukis, by J.H. Hutton shows that the Kom people are the old Kukis. This may be true.

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The nomenclature "Kom" denotes many implications. If some one asks what is Kom or who is Kom ? I would like to point the primitive "Cave".

ORIGIN

Dr. Suniti Kumar says that these Indo-Mongoloids are non else than the Kiratas frequently mentioned in the Sanskrit literature.

1400 B.C.	The primitive people were called in Sanskrit-Kirata. and English.	Cave
	It was known to the "Old Kukis" as.....	Khur,
	The Tangkhul Nagas also called it.....	Khure,
	The "New Kukis" called it.....	Khul,
	The Kabui and other Nagas called it.....	Leikhun,
	The Meeteis or Manipuri Hindus called it.....	Kom,

The heritage, and distinct entity and the prestige of the primitive people are kept and maintained by a tiny Group of people known as Koms today. Therefore Kirata^s is for the Cave meaning "Kom".

Please see Nagaland by Prakash Singh P. 6 para III, Because of the fact that the K+irata^s or the Koms were early known by the Hindu world.

Also, an eminent scientist-Dr. Ralph Solecki wrote in the History of the world as "The matter of fact, almost all the time there has been man on earth, he has been a cave man !

Sir, G.A. Grierson had dealt sufficiently with the Koms in his Linguistical Research of Tibeto-Burman family 2-3 in which he has grouped the aforesaid Kiratas or Koms into two categories as "Kukis" and "Nagas" although these nomenclatures have been embraced neither by the Kukis nor the Nagas themselves. They were led just as the sheep before the slaughter. What would be the consequence nobody knows.

Chin Language by Sir Grierson (Page 2-3)

Old Kuki Group	Northern Group	Centre Group	Southern Group
1. Rangkhoh	1. Thadou	1. Tashon	1. Chinmo
2. Bete	2. Sokte	2. Lai	2. Walaung
3. Hallam	3. Siyin	3. Lakher	3. Chinbok
4. Langrong	4. Ralte	4. Lushei	4. Yindu
5. Aimol	5. Paite	5. Banjogi	5. Chinbon
6. Anal		6. Pankhu	6. Khyang or Sho
7. Chiru			7. Khami
8. Hiro Lamkang			
9. Kolhren			
10. Koms			
11. Purums			
12. Mhar			
13. Cha			

THE SONGS OF CREATION PREHISTORIC

Paleolithic Age

1. "If I relate the Origin of Man,
I shall trace it from the beginning,
Man and Woman united in love,
That is the Origin of Man".
2. "If I relate the Origin of Fire,
I would begin from its root,
Striking a strick by a bamboo fire,
That is the Origin of Fire,
3. "The strife for riches and wealth,
I scratch the surface of the Ground,
With handheld hoe but I was,
Obstructed by the accursed Soil".

THE COUNCIL OF PRIMITIVES



The Council was presided over by the king Thankarokpa, with the following representatives to discuss and determine the Solar system.

Representatives Present :

1. Simbeng (a wee rat) Incharge of drinkings.
2. Vakanim (a tiny bird) Song leader.
3. Utokpa, the mover of Resolution.
4. Thalanthla or Charoitetu, the second mover.
5. Simbupa (the Owl) the warrior.

Mr. Utok moved the House that there should be light for six months also the Night alike.

This resolution felt flate and the birds came and pricked his body and as a result the Frog was carrying the marks till today.

Mr. Thlanthla puts his motion that there should be Light and Night "Zinglep Varlep" meaning alternately through out the Session. There came a thundering applause from the audience. Ever since then, the solar system was created and the number of Days in a month and number of months in a year had been fixed, devided and enforced till today. But an unfortunate event took place after the Council that Mr. Owl had killed the Simbeng, perhaps he had not served him properly in drinking zu or wine. This was the period when "Violence" gave birth into the world.

Theoretical Accounts of Kom's nomadic life between Eastern Asia and Western Asia are given below by the later researchers of the community concerned. Although the Kom's script is said to have been eaten by an animal, the young generations are making an effort to restore it back to its origin.

	Period	Location	Sub-Continent
The birth of History	4000 BC	Khothudpui :	Western Asia
	2000 BC	Khojepui :	
	1000 BC	Kholamdar :	
	500 BC	Khovondar :	
	400 BC	Khosekho :	
	300 BC	Khobekho :	Tiger's Village
	200 BC	Khehlai Masor:	
	100 BC	Khovong :	Eastern Asia
		(Chin Hills)	
	100 AD	Kholentlang :	
		(Arakan Hills)	
	200 AD	Rengpui Ram :	Bay of Bengal
		(Tripura)	
	300 AD	Mahoibung :	
		(Lushai Hills)	
	700 AD	Lhunglentlang :	Manipur

The Koms had been living within the Territory of Manipur for the last 1311 years today in 2011 according to Pu Lhungkho Leivonpa (1973 AD) who is well versed in the Origin of the Kom communities.

N.B. The lives of the primitive people prior to 4000 BC down to 500 BC now become untraceable and shrouded in mystery.

THE ORIGIN OF KOM TRIBES

The quotations from Sir G.A. Grierson's Linguistical Survey of Tibeto-Burman family was permitted under No. 40 (II) 16 O.C.O. Government of India. Vol. III Para 2pp.249).

NTK notes on the Thadou Kuki by will on show (Assam Civil Service) 1929.

KOM FŁOK LORE

We learnt from our ancestors that our forefathers live in the netherland (world). After they came one by one through the hole which is in the Fort of Manipur. A Tiger lays in waite and killed them as they issued. Karongpa came out wearing a stripe cloth and the Tiger because it resembles his skin, made friend with him. Then Saichepa came out and shot the Tiger, the Tiger died and in joy that every one drank wine, ate flesh and rejoiced. Leivonpa cut out the Tiger's tongue and wrapped it in his waist cloth. Hence he was named Leivonpa. On account of the old friendship, Tiger will refrain from eating Karongpa's descendants nor will they shoot Tiger. (The vow between the two heroes is strictly observed by the Karong families).

Another Version : Pu Shongthu led a party through an Hole and the party on their journey was obstructed by a great Snake or a Python. Pu Shongthu then killed him with a sword called "Chemke and another enemy also had waited them at the mouth of the Hole. Saichepa shot the Tiger and then died. Now they are all free from the dangers. So they performed a grand festival at the house of Telenpa meaning that his house square and its veranda were fit to entertain the whole party. And their name became in the subsequent generations, the head of each clan. Thus (Karong Saiche, Leivon, Telen, Serto, Lumpheng, Mhangte).

They sang and danced and rejoiced. Pu Shongthu now called himself Karongpa meaning he was equalled to the Tiger in power. Pu Shongthu sang a Song of triumph.

1. "When I came out through the Hole,
I cut the Dragon's wings-Asunder".
2. "When I came out of the Hole,
A Tiger had assailed me,
I wore a stripe cloth,
Men were issued like
Placid stream".

THE KOM TRADITION

KHURPUI (THE HOLE)

The nearness of Karong family, a member of Old Kuki with the Head of New Kuki (vide Shakspear-Lushai-Kuki Clan, NTK, Footnotes. pp. 94, may help by the following pedigrees.

(a) Old Kuki

The lineage from Shongthu
Karongpa

1. Rongpuikhup (Puvom) 2. Rongthlang
No Issue (Puvom)

2. Rongthlang
(i) Lerpu, (ii) Chinkhup, (iii) Sobui
(Extinct) As he died. at Chaison's
house his seniority remains as such-
Holkhup (Puzor)
Extinct
Pukhumsin
Rengbeknok
Dimlun
Thlukneisin
Sumtinhmang
Sumtinshon

(b) New Kuki

The lineage from Chongja
Sattong

Thangpi

Mangtol

Shingmeng

Hangmeng

Thitho

Chengjapao,

(Chief of Dongel clan)

(Under Ehpu's version)

NTK, 138

1. Nengthuchung 2. Khupneileng 3. Thangkhoyam
(No male issue)

(i) Vompu

(ii) Helkhosei

Houkhoyang

(No male issue)

2. Khupneileng

(i) Nokershon (ii) Shonchung (iii) Chaison (iv) Yampu (v) Teba
(No issue)

NTK-Notes on the Thadou Kukis by William Shaw (Assam Civil Service) 1929.

THE ART OF WEAVING

Some where 500 BC The Koms are believed to have their own Capital by the name of Khovondar in which lived a lady, Chongnu who fell in love with a python god. Before she joined him in the realm of immortality, she made her lover to lie by her side, she wove a cloth by copying the markings of her lover's body and sang a Song.



CHONGNU AND HER LOVER'S BODY

"I sat weaving upon a Rock
Placid stream runs below,
I copied the markings
Of my lover's skin
Added with Crapes
Markings too".

A similar legend is found in the Sherdukpen Folk-tale by Mr. N.B. Batra dated 18-3-1964 Thus-

A girl fell in love with a snake who was handsome in disguise. In his snake form he coiled himself in her lap, While weaving, she copied the markings her lover's body and it turned out to be the most beautiful cloth ever woven.

I am inclined to think that the two ladies might have been one person even though they were spoken off differently.

Some where 400 BC It was believed an existence of a cannibal village known as Khosekho meaning a Tiger's Village with a king, Doikungpu from whom the Magic and Witchcraft have been received, An account may follow later with Lycanthropy which often heard from the land between NEFA and Shan state.

Since the begining of 200 BC the Kom people were believed to have been spread to a domain further south-east and founded another capital-called Khobehko.

Between 100 BC 100 AD the Kom People were believed to have entered Burma and thence to Khovong, capital of Chin Hills. Then sometime in 200 AD the Kom people were said to have moved onward to Arakan Hills and Bay of Bengal respectively. Then the Kom people have entered into the land known as Tripura with their Chief Nei-Thot-Hla, the richest man of his time. Sometime later, the Chief has been left to his own Fate. At any cost, he was able to establish his kingdom, It has been quite natural that the Strong would oust the weaker ones, then the Suktes had driven out the Koms, Thadous and minor communities from the entire Chin Hills.

Very late in history Mr. Damant remarked -

In the Raj Mela, the SIVA is stated to have fallen in love with a woman belonging to the Old Kuki are mentioned in connection with Tippera Raja Changchak who flourished about 1512 AD.

The Genealogy of Rengam, the Hero

The hilly Countries stood perpetually to the north-western Bay of Bengal was regarded being the home of all the historical importance because Rengam was the product of that soil.



His birth place : between Arakan Chin Hills.	SHILNU (a girl who was cohabited by a Snake-god a daughter Zetei by Snake-god) United	SHULNU (who had been corrupted) by Zaihrang, and by all Youths,
	Sellek Vonlun Rengam, the Hero; Doikungpu, the King of Tigermen, Rangshai the Tiger.	

Rengam the human and Rangshai the Tiger became friends. Rengam had acquired a sufficient knowledge of Magic and Witchcraft from Rangshai, the Tiger friend. By means of which Rengam could perform a many remarkable achievements. That he (Rengam) could load the whole flesh of a big deer in a tiny tube of bamboo ends and also he could turn a huge stone into atoms which he carried into his pocket and planted on the hill top of Arakan Hills, Lushai Hills and Manipur Hills and are still fresh today.

Besides he was believed to bring back a life to the dying person and also could. Win the heart of the goddess called SUVAIPHEINU with whom his father was unable to cohabit. Rengam was warned to keep this incident being absolute secrecy but Rengam because of his lust of fame had failed, as a result he (RENGAM) had to pay the price of her love by his own life at her hand.

KOM CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

Habitat : The Kom Tribes formerly lived in the interior of Manipur Hills and now most of them came down to the Imphal valley in the quest of agriculture prospects and they live sparsely in the. Surrounding of Imphal valley in 4500 houses with a population of 30,000 souls at present in 2011 having no political organization to safeguard their own interests at the hands of the Government. This is because the Kom Tribes were unable to send up a representative to the State Legislature for having no single Constituency of their own.

Declination : While living in the Hill areas, they lost their population among the Khongjais (New Kukis) and in the valley amongst the Manipuri Hindus and even amongst the Kabuis.

The Kom Tribes have practically no political organization as such they were simply governed by the elected Chief although some claimed for hereditary leadership but the question is still afloat. Therefore the Koms were led like the locust without a leader. Unless they receive a sympathetic treatment at the hands of the Government of India, the condition of Koms may be worsen and their memory be forgotten in no time.

Musical Instrument The Kom Tribes were and are very fond of singing, and dancing which always accompanied by a bamboo-guard instrument and fiddle and bamboo pipe which are still existed amongst the pro-Koms outside Manipur.

Moral : The Kom Tribes maintain Shom (Dormitory) in which the youth are trained for etiquette, obedience to parents and behaviour before they attain puberty. The Koms also kept a strong moral but in case of loose sexes, the offender is liable to punish according to Custom.

Hunting : Sometimes hunting expedition was done collectively by a chase with the help of sikari-Dogs, but sometimes done it individually by pursuing the footprint of the game. And when a game was shot, the head will go to the hunter, and the neck portion will go to the father-in law of the hunter, the frontleg to his sister if any, and the Sanjang or Sating will go to his senior in lineage, and the breast-portion will go to his bosom friend and the remainder of flesh shall be enjoyed by his villagers with drinking and dancing and praising the hunter for his success in shooting games. Sometimes erected a tree for the memory of all animals he has slaughtered. Thus the hunter gains prestige in his community.

Please see Mrus in Bangladesh under National Geographic Feb. 190 from Front page 267-285, the way they live and the way they play the bamboo guard instrument and their Group dance etc and the way they drank wine or rice beer in a jar. All of these indicate nothing else than the Koms of Manipur State.

Warfare : The Kom Tribes are a peace loving race, who never once took part in the Offensive but always took a Defensive but if the enemy were proved to be too cruel in their acts then, they became adamant. And then they adopted a careful strategy. They were led by a Thempu or Magician who wore a Magic gear or Shonrei so that the enemy could not see him and his Force. Then the enemy were rounded up and burnt their camp and holocaust. The Koms were not interested to cut other man's head off but they rather preferred to take them as captives and treated them as a member of the family who then rendered a good service to the household, The Kom Tribes therefore are not inferior to any race in the scale of humanity.

LOYAL SUBJECT

In 1911-12, the Koms led during the Akbor Expedition of 200 men.

First World War : In 1917-18, out of 2000, the Kom led 500 men to France in which the so called new Kukis did not participate except that Mr. Ngulhao Thomsong led a section of the Company, (most of the participants came from Churachandpur area).

Physique : The Koms were well built with medium size bore a sworthy skin but some however, bore brown complexion with Mongoloid feature which remains always admirable.

OF MAN



Dresses : The man-folk always wear a dhoti around the waist in order to hide their shame and even at leizure time, their bodies were always covered with some sort of clothings A man of distinction wore pase-pon meaning a black cloth woven after the markings of Python-god. He puts on a turban on the head and also kept a long hairs always locked up behind the head adorned with flowers. He is however a homesick because he is anxious for domestic affairs. The Koms as a rule self-sfficient, self-reliance, independent and self-restraint from serving others lest he would be looked upon as an underling.

OF WOMAN



The weaving clothes with several designs have been a profession of the Kom woman. She wove Saipuikhup for the men, and Khamtlang and ponlak for the women with remarkable designs on the borders. They love to wash their hairs with "Sashaitui" rather than imported soaps. Because Sashitui (rice water) acts like a tonic for the brain. The women always keep their hair beauty and good smellings. They load their necks with necklaces of all kinds. They lock up hairs and always hung down on both cheeks and some people of enlightenment adorn with a gem of most celebrated colour, but rare. Besides the Kom Girls wore cowries and shells like the Naga Girls indicate that they once lived at the Sea shore.

Weapon : The Kom Tribes use axe, dao, spear, kudali, bow arrow, and shield Flintlock gun for distant hit but after the World War II, added with muzzle loading guns and rifles. They own these missile in the sense of self-protection as well as protection of crops from the wild beasts.

Domestic animals : The Koms rear pigs, fowls, goats, cows, buffaloes, mithun and the latter is said to have imported from the Western Asia. The most important of all are the cocks for timing and the dogs for the watch in general and for sacrificing purposes in particular because they think that the evil-Spirit hates the blood of the dogs. This may be the reason why people always use to hang up the killed-dog's head on the top of an altar or the village Gate.

Food & Drink : The Koms in general maintain three type of drinkings, Vai-Zu, produced out of rice mixed with husks, and Khazi-Zu which is some what similar to Naga beer and sekmai Plague or liquor. Both sexes enjoyed and drunk to the full till they walk on the Four.

The stable food is rice supplemented by vegetable curries and chatani and champhut or cooked vegetable and the delicate meats were venison and the pork and a great bulk of people abstained from taking those of noxious creatures. However the dog's flesh is held popular to some people.

The Kom Tribes grow millets, yams, some other wildroots of which the rice is the most important and the potatoes of recently imported by Rev. William Pettigrew, the first missionary came to Assam.

Omen & Dream : The Kom Tribes were influenced much by the superstitious beliefs in the Omen and Dream in all walks of life and without of which, they could not perform any puja or any religious rites.

Game & Sport : The kom loves Sports like-High jump, Long jump, Racing, Wrestling, Lifting Stone, Throwing spears, and shooting contest etc.

Beauty Contest : This is or less like the Beauty Contest of today. Miss Shornu was renown being the comet of her Tribe and Miss Mhesom E, was renown the Comet of known world.

Language : No person could be identified by language because language is spoken according to geography and the culture could be influenced by the modern civilization. The fact that a person could only be distinguished by his origin, physical feature, custom and mode of living. For example the writer's family living in Mizoram spoke many different dialects but we were made of same mould and the blood which runs in our veins are the same.

Mr. C. Runkhal of Teliamura in Tripura State makes the names of different communities of Hallam as follows :-

Marchum, Kaipeng Runkhal, Kolai, Bungsher, Shaimar, Lungai, Kupni (New and Old), Karbong, Taithak Paithak, Marchafang, Dub, Sakachep, Thankachep, Ryang Gamatia, Chakma, Goru, Mong, Mog, Tripura.

In Bangladesh :- MRUS or Morangs, who are known as "Tarao" in Manipur.

In Manipur :- The Old Kukis etc.

In Chittagong Hill Tracts :-

Banjogis and Pankhuks.

In the Annals of my ethnographical research and from the ethnological and etymological points of view, I beg to conclude that these various sub-tribes are found to be one and the same people of one origin.

KOM'S LITERATURE

Renaissance -Teba Karong is the first writer who wrote a First Primer for Kukis in 1912 but due to its mixture of various Kuki dialects, the Thadou Kuki had rejected it for a medium of instruction led to its abandonment.

In 1926, the same writer wrote Kom Primer -I. The English alphabet of 26 letters etc with another 4 letters are added with diacritical marks as (ā,ō,t,ū) bearing a separate vowel each, Thus :-

Ka (my), Kā (room, kō (nine)

ti (say), tit (fear), um (stay), ūm (guard).

CONFUSION BETWEEN "R" AND "L"

The New Kukis have got no letter "r" in their literature, therefore "r" has often been replaced by "l" thus Kilong or the Karong was used.

Beliefs : The Kom Tribes believe in dual Deities Pathen (God), the Supreme and Lungjei, His younger, It was believed that God created all the living Beings and the universe in consultation with his younger brother Lungjei.

World & Heaven : The Kom people also believe that God had created the world and heaven with all the Celestial Beings and the Heaven was regarded as the "Home" for all Gods and Angels.

Sacrifices : Although the Koms believe in the existence of one sole God, yet almost all the time, they direct their sacrifices to the evil spirits and order to propitiate them from anger so that the evil spirits may not hurt them by illness or misfortune.

Heaven & Hades : The Koms believe in the existence of Soul after the physical death. So God has created Heaven for the abode of pious men and women when they died and the bad men and women shall be bound to live in hades. Pious people shall enjoy eternity with God and the wicked people shall be doomed in Hell forever.

But in the minds of heathens, the slain persons shall serve the murderers in the next world etc.

INROI (HOUSEHOLD GOD)

Worship : Blood feud was prevalent in those days, the Kom warriors went to counteract with the enemy but the river had been overflowed and there was no means to cross it. By chance a python god was transformed into a log and lay across the river. The Kom warriors found it and each of them crossed to safety through that log. In dream, the python god appeared to their leader and ~~and~~ said it was he who delivered them from the deluge of water as well as from the hands of their enemy. The Kom Tribes particularly worship him as House god ever since then.

Khoser or Genna : If there is a rumour that epidemic like the cholera or smallpox invading the area of neighbourhood then, the village as a whole perform a Genna during which nobody was allowed to enter into the village nor nobody was allowed to go outside for some days until and unless the Thempu or priest declared its safety.

Treatment of Sick : In this a Thempu or Maiba will come and feel the pulse of the Sick man, and woman and tells to what Spirit a sacrifice is to be offered etc.

Disposal of Dead Body : The Koms as a rule maintain a Grave Yard in which those of good natural death will be buried by killing cow or any other animals if the family could afford to meet the expentiture. But the Thise or bad death caused by a Tiger or serpent or any undesirable death would not be allowed to bury in the Grave Yard but buried them outside the Gate.

Transpotation of Soul : This may be an heinous act to other communities while it was an essential duty of Kom Tribes that the grave of the dead should be reopened after a year by the Sakamaks meaning the son-in laws who removed the head from the main trunk and washed it with wine or liquor and then wrapped it with a new cloth and transferred it to the Grave where his or her family's heads had been stored up collectively in a big jar or pot. It was belived that the Soul of the dead had now gone to the above of his or her ancestors.

KOM CUSTOM AND RELIGION

Brothers are One : The Kom's sentiment may appear to some a strange but this was a bond of love between the brothers. That every thing in the family belonged to them in common. If one of them died then the survivor would inherit properties of the deceased. The widow is however returned to the parents when she had no suitor from her husband's family.

Inheritance : According to some authorities, the inheritance of a father goes to the youngest male issue but some people claim that inheritance should go to the eldest son but I think it to be a new concept, came along with the civilization.

Marriage : The Marriage of a son to be arranged by the parents of the parties as follows :-

The seven clans of Koms :

Karongpa, Leivonpa, Sertopa, Telenpa, Saiche, Lumpheng, Hmangte.

All professing Koms have been descended from these clans and marriage between the same clan is forbidden and taboo and seldom occurred.

Legitimate : A marriage between A Brother and A Sister; A Daughter and A Son are forbidden. But there is Married in order to keep the bloodline pure, sister's son is bound to marry daughter of his father in law. In the case if he fails to do so then the boy has got to pay one mithun being Pukhe means a fine for not keeping the custom. The marrying boy had to serve his father in law for a term of 3 years, then released.

Marriage Price : Generally the marriage price was fixed up to 5 mithuns, one gong of 8 palms, and another gong of seven palms, etc. All the first instance the bridegroom is allowed to pay the Manpui by mithun and kill a pig and made several jars of zu and the remainder Mangkat may be paid later on.

Adultery : If the wife commits adultery with other man then she had to return double of the Mangkat paid previously but in case her husband is willing to keep her then she had to pay only one mithun being the charge of defamation. If her husband commits adultery with another woman, he had to pay only one mithun to his father in law being "Mhaibe" meaning defamation.

Divorce : Dissolution of the Christian marriage is not permissible. When either of the husband or the wife is dead, he or she could marry with other person with the blessing and permission of the Church elders and the members of the village concerned. Before the coming of the Christianity, the dissolution of marriage is seldom happening among the Koms. Every case of the proposal of divorce is strictly examined by the chief/villagers of the village concerned.

In case, the appeal for divorce comes from the wife, she is then fined with one pig (Wai) for defamation to the villagers. Similarly if the appeal from the husband comes, he is fined with one pig of 5 (Wai) for defamation and all the articles belonging to the wife, will be returned back. All the children belong to the house of the father.

Besides, the appellant will be given one pig of 5 (Wai) to the villagers who will sacrifice the animal and have a feast. A man may have more than one wife, but polygamy is not encouraged in the Kom community. In case when the man who forcefully takes the wife of other, he is fined 2 pigs of 5 (Wai) and one mithun as defamation. No one takes interest to have accompany with him. He is considered as outcast person.

Pre- marital sex is contemptible according to the Kom custom. If the boy refuses to marry a girl, he is liable to be fined with one mithun for defamation. In case, the marriage function takes place, the villagers did not give co-operation. Child marriage is not prevalent in the Kom Society. Generally, the marriage age for the girls is about 20 and 25 years as respectively, whereas it is 25 and 30 years of age on the part of the boys.

Widow remarriage is permissible in the Kom Society. If the widow marries with her husband's group, some amount of manghet can be given. But when she marries outside her husband's group, the manghet at the time of her marriage, was returned to her deceased husband's house hold. However, the woman returns to her parental house after the death of her husband, marries again with other, she will return manghet which may be less than the former one.

Elopement : Since customary marriage often shows a costly, the poor youngmen frequently chose Elopement. But the elopement took place between the same family lineage, then the couple had to be ousted from the village till death because they think that such uncustomary marriage will bring ill-luck to the family and a curse to the village. So the parents are declined to talk about the marriage price etc.

But if the elopement with an unpolluted lineage, then their parents are to settle about the marriage price when they surrendered themselves.

Childbirth : amongst the Koms, the childbirth is given by the woman by kneeling upon some soft clothes. While the husband sat on a stool holding round her chest. Sometimes a relative or a friend came for help. Immediately a child is born, the child navelcord is cut, till placenta is come out, the mother usually leaning against her husband.

Then she was given some zu to drink for refreshment and the child was allowed to be put on her breast. The placenta and the umbilical cords are put in an earthen pot, and buried it in the coner of the house.

Naming the Child : After 6 days of delivery, and when the child's navel cord is healed up and then the child was allowed to be carried outside. If the child is a male one, then the child should be given a compound name of his grand-father or great Grant father but for the female child, it does not matter so much. The idea was that by giving the child a compound name with his grand father would keep the family lineage pure and unbroken. Please also see note on Thadou Kuki at page 51 para 2-4.

LOOKING FOR A CHANGE

The world is too old and too tired of corruption. The Kom custom and culture have been to the works of modern civilization. The Koms believe in Inroi-a snake incarnate is no longer acceptable in the scientific age discovering a True God.

LYCANTHROPY AND PYTHON FOLK TALE APPENDIX-A

1. Lycanthropy
2. Mhesom E,
3. Rengtonghoi
4. Python
5. Golden Beam
6. Warlaung's Dog.

KOM-FOLK LORE

Lycanthrophy has long been entertained by the Greeks before Christian era and the story was common among the Koms as well as the Nagas. But I find no Scholar has ever mentioned the origin of were-Tiger. So I am going to touch the gloomy part in these stories.

(a) There lived a lady by the name Mhesom E, meaning a Comet of the known world. Her fame was spread so far and wide that a young Tigerman became mad at the News. He determined to ask her hand in marriage. Before I go in details, I beg to say that there was a brook in an unknown place somewhere in the country where the were-Tigers lived in a village. It was said any one who drank water from that brook would suddenly shiver till he or she turns to a Tiger. Therefore the Koms called it "SAHMANG TUI SHAK" meaning cannibal Brook. Also the Kom ladies were very particular in choosing their matches because it was generally believed for the existence of lycanthrophy and a witch among the men.

Now the story begins-One day the were-Tiger was wandering in search of game and came to a human village where he met an old woman. He tried to kill her but the old woman told him to go to the next door where a beautiful girl was sitting. He went and seized her and took her to the Tiger's village. The were-Tiger had dual existence. In the day time they are in a real human nature and also could transform into a cannibal. Two strongest men of the village were called upon to rescue her from the hand of the were-Tiger. Both Fothir and Rhangche pursued her. They fought a fatal battle with the were-Tiger and brought back the lady to her parents and friends once more.

He (Tiger) picked up some of her fallen hairs and kept them in Casket and muttered a few magic formulas by means of which the lady was carried in the Casket.

KOM (FOLK LORE)^u

APPENDIX-B



There in a family were seven brothers and a girl by name RENGTONGHOI a beautiful par excellent girl of the age. A were-Tiger, a handsome youngman in disguise and visited her while all her brothers went out of door in order to look after their jhum cultivation. She was then regarded as the princess of the realm. The youngman came playing a bamboo-guard-instrument then, the lady sang to him :-

"Will you Sir, tell me thy origin,
Do tell me the origin of Rangshai" ?

As was said in the foregoing paragraphs that Rangshai was a were-Tiger who had invented 'Roshem' a bamboo-guard-instrument and the song-called after his own name 'Rangshaihla' which has become very popular amongst the Kom Tribes when he played his bamboo-instrument the lady because of the magic in the tune, she became frustrated at his feet. He carried her away to the Tiger's village before her brothers returned from the field.

The seven brothers came home in the evening and when they knocked the door, no response whatsoever. They all wept bitterly for losing their only sister in the arm of an unknown fellow.

All seven pursued their sister. They reached to the were-Tigers village where their sister was kept that no one was allowed to enter into it. The seven brothers fought a good battle with the were-Tiger then they rescued their beloved Sister from the hands of the were-Tigers and returned home safely and rejoicing Please see what Scholars say about them.

Lycanthropy among the Semas, never undergone a physical transformation but indirectly comes on at the bidding of a spirit (sema Naga by J.H. Hutton, P. 201)

1. The belief in the existence of Tiger men; with the power of turning themselves into Tigers; 2. The belief in the existence of a village inhabited only by women. (Nagas by Verrier Elwin P. 622)

PYTHON AND GOLDEN BEAM

APPENDIX-C

KOMFOLK LORE

It is not surprising that Python-gods use to be in love with the daughters of men in the long history of the world. Sometime in 700 AD a Python-god fell in love with a lady-Lenghoi by name, of Chothe, a member of Old Kuki who was renown as Pakhangba and another Python-god called Wangburen fell in love with an Anal Khullen lady and also another Python-god fell in love with a Kuki lady from Saiton village and was renown as Santhong-Lai. Thus the people of Manipur pay them homage every year.

Not very long ago, Telenpa, the Chief of Langkhong Khullen has decided to construct a durable house for him. One day he set out in search of KHANGABU or the top most beam of the house which ! called it a "Golden-Beam" because it used to shine at night.

It so happens that Telenpa saw a tree very straight from distance but when he went nearer, he found it as crooked as a snake, so he left it but when he looked back, it was so lovely one, he could not resist the temptation but fell it. Then he went up to the trunk, it was worsen, still, he fell the tree but blood rushed out from the cut. He mourned for a while, then asked his men to carry it home. It served for the Beam as intended but to his great surprise, the beam was shining at night time. So the news was spread far and reached to the ears of kachari king who sent a campaign of 30 men to seize it by means of force.

As the invaders were equipped with deadly weapons, no resistance was offered. Then, they, pulled down the newly built house and took away the "Golden Beam". All in row put the Beam upon their shoulders and quit the village and departed towards Cachar. When they tried to carry it across the Irang River where all of them were drawn into the Waterbed and none escaped. The Python then slipped away. So the saying comes true that "he who hesitates is lost".

Telenpa had a dream that a man appeared to him and said-he will not depart from him for-ever. So asked him not to forget to pay him homage from time to time that he will be responsible for his well being.

This may perhaps be the reason why the Kom Tribes worship him as House-god ever since then.

There were gaints in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the son of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men who were old, men of renown (Please see Gen. Ch. 6:4).

APPENDIX-D

(Warlaungpa)

A TREE OF LIFE

Legend says that there lived seven brothers sometime in 200 BC somewhere in Burma. One day the seven brothers went to clear jungle for jhumming purposes and they reserved the youngest brother to prepare a dinner for the them. So they put him under a huge tree growing there by with all necessities for the meal.

The six brothers were very busy in cutting and clearing the thick jungle but were exhausted being hungry and thirsty as they toiled in the hot sun. By chance they found a big Python who occupied the Woods. All six chased him and finally they slaughtered the Python for the meal. Now they have instructed their youngest brother to cook the flesh nicely and well. So the boy had cut the game into pieces them in a cooking pot. While the cooking process was on, it was strange that a leaf from the above tree was fallen into the cooking pot and instantly the snake coiled up from the pot and crept away.

The youngman was aggrieved for the incident and was much worried what his brothers would think about it. The six brothers came but found no meat for the dinner. Before the boy could explain the cause they struck him down to the ground muttering that he has eaten the whole flesh by himself without a slightest consideration for his elders' anxiety for food. The boy was left broken limbs. A supreme thought came to his mind saying if a leaf from this very tree could survive a dead snake already in the cooking pot then why not heal his broken limbs when he touches the same tree. he was crawling under that tree.

He touched the tree and immediately he was cured from his broken bones and limbs. He now peeled much of the barks from the tree and wrapped them with his cloth. When he reached the village Gate, he saw a dead dog's head was hung up at the Gate. Then he touched the dead dog's head with his barks, then the Dog jumped down to the group and followed him.

Again when he entered the village with the Dog, he heard commotion and rumour saying the beautiest girl of the village had died of illness. Then he approached the dying lady and when he touched her with his bark, she was survived, So the parents offer the lady to Warlaung for his marvellous achievement.

Now Warlaung, his beautiful wife and his Dog came home. One day, Mr. Warlaung has gone to see his jhum-cultivation, the poor wife being unwarranted innocent of the Magic like Barks had spread them to the Sun. Then, the Sun and Moon came down to seize the Braks but his obedient Dog who always sat by the bundle in which contained his master's Barks, did not allow any one to come nearby. Then, the Moon thought the better to carry both Dog and the Barks. So the Moon had lifted them into heaven.

When Warlaung's Dog remembered his master on the earth, he was angry and tried to swallow up the Moon and some other time the Sun. This is what the other people called it- "Eclipse" of moon.

